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The first lesson taught in Esoteric philosophy is, that the incognizable Cause does not put forth evolution, whether consciously or unconsciously, but only exhibits periodically different aspects of itself *to the perception of* finite *Minds.*

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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III *The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.*

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THE THEOSOPHY COMPANY

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AUM

The better is one thing, the dearer is another thing; these two bind a man in opposite ways. —KATHA UPANISHAD

THEOSOPHY

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THE NINTH CREATION

THE workings of higher mind are a naturally attractive area of inquiry for the Theosophical student, and at the same time, obscure. How shall we know when the processes of Higher Manas are making themselves felt? How can they be recognized in others? What plausible confusions and self-deceptions may be involved? This philosophic inquiry has importance since it seeks an aspect of self-knowledge, although here, as in all pursuits which are in some sense both personal and impersonal, "a sense of pride would mar the work." It may be said that only as we forget ourselves are we in a position to identify the presence of the higher manasic light. The habit of thinking with the higher mind, H.P.B. observes, can be developed, "but only with great difficulty, a firm determination, and through much self-sacrifice." Yet it is "comparatively easy for those who are born with the gift."

In her treatise on this subject, the article, "Psychic and Noëtic Action," H.P.B. says:

> Now, since the metaphysics of Occult physiology and psychology postulate within mortal man an immortal entity, "divine Mind," or *Nous,* whose pale and too often distorted reflection is that which we call "Mind" and intellect in men—virtually an entity apart from the former during the period of every incarnation—we say that the *two* sources of "memory" are in these two "principles." These two we distinguish as the Higher

> *Manas* (Mind or Ego), and the *Kama-Manas, i.e.,* the rational, but earthly or physical intellect of man, incased in, and bound by, matter, therefore subject to the influence of the latter: the all-conscious SELF, that which reincarnates periodically—verily the WORD made flesh!—and which is always the same, while its reflected "Double," changing with every new incarnation and personality, is, therefore, conscious but for a life-period. The latter "principle" is the *Lower* Self, or that, which manifesting through our *organic* system, acting on this plane of illusion, imagines itself the *Ego Sum,* and thus falls into what Buddhist philosophy brands as the "heresy of separateness." The former, we term INDIVIDUALITY, the latter *Personality.* From the first proceeds all the *noëtic* element, from the second, the *psychic, i.e.,* "terrestrial wisdom" at best, as it is influenced by all the chaotic stimuli of the human or rather *animal passions* of the living body.

Who, then, are *we*? Are we the *Manasaputra,* sons of Mahat? The answer must be both yes and no. What we are is a consequence of the incarnation of mind, but we are not yet entitled to call ourselves true members of that high hierarchy. Humans are beings in a process of self-transformation. They are what they become. As H.P.B. remarks in an answer to a questioner (in *Lucifer* VI, 412), average humanity is made up of those "who received but a spark." She adds: "Therefore it is incorrect to say that *we* are the Manasaputras. Those in whom the Manasaputras, as such, incarnate, do not belong to our average humanity."

"We," then, for most of the time, are a kind of mixture of the awareness gained through the senses, with all that this implies, plus the reflection on this plane of the light of higher Mind. As H.P.B. explains:

> For, as Occultism teaches, if the Higher Mind-Entity—the permanent and the immortal—is of the divine homogeneous essence of "Alaya-Akasa," or Mahat,—its reflection, the Personal Mind, is, as a temporary "Principle," of the substance of the Astral Light. As a pure ray of the "Son of the Universal Mind," it could perform no functions in the body, and would remain powerless over the turbulent organs of Matter. Thus, while its inner constitution is Manasic, its "body," or rather functioning essence, is heterogeneous, and leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether. It is a part of the mission of the Manasic Ray, to get gradually rid of the blind, deceptive element which, though it makes of it an active spiritual entity on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions. ("Psychic and Noëtic Action.")

How, then, do human beings proceed to get rid of the "blind, deceptive element" in their thinking?

Plotinus spoke of this progression as a movement from opinion to science, and from science to illumination. "Opinion," here, means little more than sense-perception plus hearsay, since hearsay amounts to uninspected, "unrationalized" impressions obtained from others. "Science" is the exercise of reason, which discovers an order lying above sense. It is no accident that the modern sciences, as they progress to maturity, become increasingly mathematical. Order, in the world, is typified by number, and the consideration of number, apart from what the numbers happen to represent, is *abstract* thinking. Mathematics is an ideal representation of the power of Manas when exercised on this plane. It is not, however, knowledge of this plane, but knowledge of the symmetries which are found to occur throughout this plane. One might call the mastery of mathematics a halfway house between sense life and true Manasic existence. Mathematics is an example of reason, conceived as the "higher light" of lower Manas. As one thinks in mathematical terms, the thought-processes become impersonal. The use of reason takes us "out of ourselves." It is not emancipation *per se,* since the resulting skills can be used for either high or low purposes, but it nonetheless illustrates a kind of progress for the personal ego. Both Pythagoras and Plato required their pupils to study mathematics. Plato said that through mathematics one learns how to think abstractly. Abstract thinking is the plane of reason. When purity of life combines with abstract thinking, the lower mind, H.P.B. says, "though liable to err from its own motives, will always side with reason against the animal proclivities of the body."

Interestingly, H.P.B. gave another emphasis in her instruction. She did not say, in so many words, study mathematics if you would clear up your minds and thus find the way. She did say, study metaphysics, or what might be termed the mathematics of the soul.

The Fundamental Propositions of the Secret Doctrine are the tools of this study. The Theosophical student who attends to H.P.B.'s injunction concerning the Fundamentals learns to reason with the higher light of the lower mind. The study is not purely abstract, as in mathematics (as now taught), but has vital connection with the aspiration of the inner man. Occult metaphysics are concerned with the passage of the soul through states of conscious-

ness on the way to recovery of its original high state, plus the knowledge gained from experience. By study, we add to the memory of the personal mind or "principle" a reflective awareness of what it is trying to do, or what we are trying to do *with* it. This "we" takes charge when the lower mind is authentically recognized as an instrument—the instrument which makes of us an active spiritual entity on this plane—and not the true Self.

Little by little, from study, the personal mind is trained to think on higher manasic lines. The necessities of metaphysical reason become increasingly important in our thinking—increasingly *real.* Eventually, by this process, the lower mind is made to feel more and more "at home" in thought about transcendental reality. The process is long and arduous, but by study we make a beginning. The progress becomes intense in just that degree to which it is pursued, not for self, but for the good of all.

We might take an illustration, using a passage in *The Secret Doctrine.* Early in the first volume, in a comment on Stanza III (page 62), speaking of the first stages of manifestation, H.P.B. says:

> The expansion "from within without" of the Mother, called elsewhere the "Waters of Space," "Universal Matrix," etc., does not allude to an expansion from a small centre or focus, but, without reference to size or limitation or area, means the development of limitless subjectivity into as limitless objectivity. "The ever (to us) invisible and immaterial Substance present in eternity, threw its periodical shadow from its own plane into the lap of Maya." It implies that this expansion, not being an increase in size—for infinite extension admits of no enlargement —was a change of condition. It "expanded like the bud of the Lotus"; for the Lotus plant exists not only as a miniature embryo in its seed (a physical characteristic), but its prototype is present in an ideal form in the Astral Light from "Dawn" to "Night" during the Manvantaric period, like everything else, as a matter of fact, in this objective Universe; from man down to mite, from giant trees down to the tiniest blades of grass.

Here we have a wonderful combination of abstract metaphysics with graphic symbolism. Both are languages adopted for garb of ideas deriving from the higher mind, yet using terms we recognize as also applying to our sensuous world. We are obliged to wrestle with paradox by this passage—to "translate" the sense of feeling of reality we have acquired here on earth into a higher sort of awareness. "Expansion," for example, we are told, takes place, but

this is not what we ordinarily mean by expansion. The language of commensurables, the only one we know, is applied to the plane of incommensurables. We must "translate" the term "expansion" into another meaning because, H.P.B. says, "infinite extension admits of no enlargement."

Well, we see this. How can anything that is limitless to begin with get any bigger? But there is nothing limitless in our sense experience. The senses have no awareness of anything limitless. They report only the finite, the visible, the dimensioned. Thus, for the lower mind, the idea of a reality without limit is not a cognition but an inference. There *must* be a limitless order of reality, we say to ourselves, since we are able to speak of limits. The word "limits" obtains its meaning from contrast to the limitless. Thus our very minds, however themselves limited, infer the reality of the limitless. We can't really think without this postulate. And such thought is not only necessary, but affords far-reaching discipline, introducing us to the philosophic or metaphysical science of what *must* be, even though we can't "see" it at all.

Study of the Fundamental Propositions is the exercise of this discipline. It is indeed abstract. It prepares the personal mind for reception of higher manasic inspiration. The obstacles to a grasp of spiritual reality are gradually removed.

We have certain difficulties in accomplishing this, of course. The personal mind is instructed by our philosophy: Human beings are essentially consciousness. The self is said to be a point or center of awareness. "I am that," we are invited to repeat, after hearing from the Teacher, "That thou art."

Does the affirmation have meaning? Is it satisfactory to think that we are basically consciousness? Does the idea of consciousness suffice to amplify our sense of identity? Or do we long to give this definition a more tangible substance? The personal mind certainly does. It would like a more "concrete" selfhood, more allied to the personal activities, longings, and hopes which make up the content of everyday life. The personality doesn't want to be "shaved" away to bare abstraction.

Dwell on the idea of the self as bodiless and free, the Teachers say. Generate the feeling of reality for *That* to take the place of what you now feel for earthly embodiment.

Thinking abstractly, thinking metaphysically, reasoning at the

level of the statements of *The Secret Doctrine* will gradually initiate us into such feelings of reality. The task undertaken is by no means easy. It is like rebuilding one's house while living in it. There are many inconveniences and deprivations. Yet it can be done. A reading of *The Secret Doctrine* convinces us that it can be done. The book is a magnificent demonstration as well as instruction.

Another passage approaches the question in another way. On page 58 (Vol. I) H.P.B. says:

> The first and Fundamental dogma of Occultism is Universal Unity (or Homogeneity) under three aspects. This led to a possible conception of Deity, which as an absolute unity must remain forever incomprehensible to finite intellects. "If thou wouldst believe in the Power which acts within the root of a plant, or imagine the root concealed under the soil, thou hast to think of its stalk or trunk and of its leaves and flowers. Thou canst not imagine that Power independently of these objects. Life can be known only by the Tree of Life. . . ." (Precepts for Yoga). The idea of *Absolute* Unity would be broken entirely in our conception, had we not something concrete before our eyes to contain that Unity. And the deity being absolute, must be omnipresent, hence not an atom but contains IT within itself. The roots, the trunk and its many branches are three distinct objects, yet they are one tree.

We have here an accounting for the endless use of symbolism by all teachers. A symbol is a representative image—it represents something other than itself, although *like* itself. The field of sense experience is the source of symbols, just as the world of matter in space is the field of mathematical representation, beginning with geometrical figures evolved from a single point, and as the world of human struggle, triumph, and tragedy is the source of myth. All these areas of experience—including what we are familiar with through the senses, the mind, and the feelings—supply the materials for symbolic representation of the world known to the higher mind. They are references here for what is hidden from us there: hidden because of the limitations of the personal mind. When one sees a symbol, one *reaches* after meaning. This reaching, if in the right direction, is in itself an invitation to the higher mind. According as we have prepared the lower mind, the higher accepts the invitation. But without that preparation, "the songster mute and torpid sits, and of exhaustion dies."

The finite world we experience is a mortal image—coarse and

reversed—of the timeless world of the higher ego. The forms used by the wise as symbols—whether geometrical or organic—are likely to be *classic* forms, notable for their symmetry, as in the case of the lotus. The movement of all life toward fulfillment is somehow inscribed in the forms of nature. We *feel* this quality in the symbols, much more significantly, perhaps, than we can put into words. It is like the surge of longing in a phrase of Beethoven—we grasp it, but we cannot "say" it. Symbols serve us in this way, although they may also be interpreted, as throughout *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. interprets them.

All the world moves by reason of its animating spirit. We move by our animating spirit. The two movements have a harmony, even a common direction, whatever the incidental conflicts and oppositions along the way. Symbols are a language which expresses these things in visible correspondences, they help us to understand complexities dissolving into simplicities, the simplicities elaborating into complexities. By these means the lower mind is habituated to think in resonance with the way that the world works. If we study the "below" in all its wonder and harmony, recognizing dissonance as the lack of harmony for sufficient reason, we begin to obtain a balanced subjective impression of the reality of the "above." Again, the mind is made ready for a further incarnation of Manas. True *culture*—the arts and crafts and sciences—prepares the mind and feelings for the reception of higher meanings. The fibres of the psyche are tuned, the pitch of understanding made true by repeated hearing of the melodic lines in nature.

When longing is replaced by will, and wishing by study and brotherly action, Higher Manas gains a home constructed for it on earth. It does not descend to earth, but earth, through the agency of determined souls, acquires an upper story, a place of refinement and responsiveness to the eternal ideas that are the being of the spiritual soul.

The imprint of higher manas is on all the surfaces of our changing days and ways. Every abstract thought we think was made possible by higher manas. Every conscious rule of life, every formulation of law, every idea of nobility, excellence, and virtue is a reflection here of what is *natural* to the spiritual Ego. In isolation and conflict with the pressing demands of earthly existence and desires, these imprints are left without coherence, becoming only markers of lost meanings, relics of forgotten truth. The personal

man, in short, lives by a reflected light, thinks by a science borrowed from the gods, and dreams of fulfillments mislocated on earth and delusively counted in material wealth.

Many of these inverted readings of human experience can be turned into symbols of the true enterprise and odyssey of soul. As this is done, the symbols become instinct with a life coming from the spirit, and are read once more by the young with open hearts and minds. H.P.B. was the herald who announced this great duty of human consciousness, and the taskmaster who defined how the work should be done. She addressed mainly those who have already had some faint indication from within of the stirring of the Promethean spirit. She called upon Theosophists to unite that stirring with conscious effort, explaining what is at stake.

THE ROOT OF RELIGION

The Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion. It proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in nature. It denies Deity no more than it does the Sun. Esoteric philosophy has never rejected God in Nature, nor Deity as the absolute and abstract *Ens*. It only refuses to accept any of the gods of the so-called monotheistic religions, gods created by man in his own image and likeness, a blasphemous and sorry caricature of the Ever Unknowable.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE PROMULGATION OF THEOSOPHY

TOO much attention has been paid by several to the opinions of men in the world who have a reputation in science and in scholarship. Their opinions are valuable in their respective fields, but the ideas of the world should not be permitted to dwarf our work or smother our heart's desire. These owners of reputations do not entirely govern the progress of the race.

The great mass of mankind are of the common people, and it is with them we have chiefly to deal. For our message does not come only for the scholar and the scientific man. In spite of scholars, in spite of science, the superstitions of the people live on. And perhaps those very superstitions are the means of preserving to us the almost forgotten truth. Indeed, had we listened only to those learned in books, we would long ago have lost all touch with our real life.

If we believe in our message and in the aim of the Society, we ought never to tire telling the people that which they can understand. And the rich as well as the poor are the people to whom I refer. They need the help of Theosophy, for they are wandering very close to the marshes of materialism. They must have a true ethic, a right philosophy. Tell them of our great doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. Tell of these with confidence, unshaken by opinions of others, and that confidence of yours will beget confidence in the hearer. Science and exact scholarship are factors in our progress, but although they are important, the mass of the people are more important still. You cannot scientifically prove everything. But if you are sure, as so many of us are, that we are immortal pilgrims, then tell the people plainly and practically how they have been here before in other bodies, and will be here again to suffer or enjoy just as they may have decided in their other life, and they will believe it. They will soon come to that belief because these laws are facts in nature, facts in their real experience. Were I to attend only to scholars, I should be able to do no other work, while all the time my fellow creatures—not scholars and in

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NOTE.—This article is from an address given by Mr. Judge in London at the close of the European T.S. Convention in 1892, and was last reprinted in THEOSOPHY for July, 1962.

the vast majority—would be deprived of the spiritual help it was my duty to give them.

We are really working for the future, laying the foundation for a greater day than this. We are all coming back together to carry on this work if we now take up all our opportunities. We must act from duty now, and thus be right for the future.

Our duty is to recognize the great human soul with which we have to deal and for which we should work. Its progress, its experience, its inner life, are vastly more important than all our boasted civilization. That civilization could easily be swept away, and what would be left? Your country could be frozen up solidly in a few weeks, were the Gulf Stream deflected from these shores. Mines have honeycombed your land, and a good earthquake might easily shake all your material glories to destruction beneath the sea. What then could remain save the human experience, the experience of the soul? But no cataclysm can destroy your thoughts. They live on. And so all the work that you do for the inner life of man can meet with no destruction, even though records and books and all the ingenious works upon this outer plane were swept out of existence. If then you believe in this mighty doctrine of Reincarnation, do not be afraid to tell it.

But do not, as Theosophists, confine yourselves to the intellect. The dry or the interesting speculations upon all the details of cosmogony and anthropology will not save the world. They do not cure sorrow nor appeal to those who feel the grinding stones of fate, and know not why it should be so. Address yourselves therefore to using your intellectual knowledge of these high matters, so as to practically affect the hearts of men.

Our debt to science is very great. It has levelled the barriers and made freedom of thought a possibility. Science is our friend, for without its progress you would now, at the order of the bigot, all be in the common jail. It has combated the strength and cut the claws of bigoted churches. And even those iconoclasts, such as Robert Ingersoll, who often violate the sentiment and ideals of many good men, have helped in this progress, for they have done the tearing down which must precede the building up. It is our place to supply the new structure, for the churches are beginning to find that they must look into subjects which once were kept out of sight. A sign of this was seen at a recent Council of the Methodist Church in America, where their brightest lights declared that they must accept

evolution, or they would go down. The only church which does not publicly as yet proclaim on these matters is the Roman Catholic. It is so sly that I should not be surprised ere long to hear of its throwing its mantle over all our doctrines publicly, and saying that such had always been its doctrine. But if that step be taken it will be the fatal one. So even that need give us no fear.

We are working with and for the great unseen, but actual Brotherhood of Humanity, and in our efforts, if sincere, will have the aid of those our Brothers who have perfected themselves before us and are ever ready to help on the human family. So if we are firmly fixed in that belief, we can never weaken.

I have heard some words about our pretending to be undogmatic, or that our claim to freedom is against the fact. I do not hold such an opinion. Our Society is, as a body, wholly unsectarian. It must always be so. But that does not affect the inevitable result of so many joined in one effort. A large number of us must have come at last to a common belief. This we can boldly say, and at the same time also that no enquirer is obliged to subscribe to those beliefs. For this we have the warrant, not only of our own statutes, but also that of the oft-repeated declarations of H. P. Blavatsky. If I have a belief which works with all the problems that vex us so much, then I will tell it to my fellow who has joined these ranks. If wrong, the interchange of thought will correct me; if right, the truth must at last prevail. In this, Brotherhood means toleration of opinion, and not a fear of declaring the beliefs you hold, nor does that declaration negative in the least the claim to unsectarianism.

This Society is a small germ of a nucleus for a real outer Brotherhood. If we work aright the day must come when we shall have accomplished our aim and formed the nucleus. If we had five hundred members in the Society loving one another with true hearts, not criticizing nor condemning, and all bent on one aim with one belief—we could sweep the whole world with our thoughts. And this is our work in the future, the work traced out for us by those Masters in whom so many of us firmly believe.

If we only have patience, what a glorious, wide, and noble prospect opens up before us!

THE WISDOM RELIGION

III: THE SOURCES

THE Preface to *Isis Unveiled* begins with these words:

> The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science. . . . It is an attempt to aid the student to detect the vital principles which underlie the philosophical system of old. . . . In our studies, mysteries were shown to be no mysteries. . . . Reverently we stepped in spirit within the temple of Isis; to lift aside the veil of "the one that is and was and shall be" at Sais; to look through the rent curtain of the Sanctum Sanctorum at Jerusalem; and even to interrogate within the crypts which once existed beneath the sacred edifice, the mysterious Bath-Kol. The *Filia Vocis*—the daughter of the divine voice—responded from the mercy-seat within the veil, and science, theology, every human hypothesis and conception born of imperfect knowledge, lost forever their authoritative character in our sight. The one-living God had spoken through his oracle—man, and we were satisfied. Such knowledge is priceless; and it has been hidden only from those who overlooked it, derided it, or denied its existence.

This theme of the existence of mystic brotherhoods is continued in various places in *Isis*:

> There are, scattered throughout the world, a handful of thoughtful and solitary students, who pass their lives in obscurity, studying the great problems of the physical and spiritual universes. They have their secret records in which are preserved the fruits of the scholastic labours of the long line of recluses whose successors they are. The knowledge of their early ancestors, the sages of India, Babylonia, Nineveh, and the imperial Thebes; the legends and traditions commented upon by the masters of Solon, Pythagoras, and Plato, in the marble halls of Heliopolis and Sais; traditions, which, in their days, already seemed to hardly glimmer from behind the foggy curtain of the past;—all this, and much more, is recorded on indestructible parchment, and passed with jealous care from one adept to another. These men believe the story of Atlantis to be no fable, but maintain that at different epochs of the past huge islands, and even continents, existed where now there is but a wild waste of waters. In those submerged temples and libraries the archeologist would find, could he but explore them, the materials for filling all the gaps that now exist in what we imagine is *history*. (I, 557-58.)

There was a sort of Brotherhood, or Freemasonry among the kabalists scattered all over the world, since the memory of man; and like some societies of the mediaeval Masonry of Europe, they called themselves *Companions* ("Die Kabbala," p. 95) and *Innocents* (Gaffarel: Introduction to "Book of Enoch.") It is a belief (founded on knowledge) among the kabalists, that no more than the Hermetic rolls are the genuine sacred books of the seventy-two elders—books which contained the *"Ancient Word"*—lost, but that they have all been preserved from the remotest times among secret communities. Emanuel Swedenborg says as much, and his words are based, he says, on the information he had from certain *spirits*, who assured him that "they performed their worship according to this Ancient Word." "Seek for it in China," adds the great seer, "peradventure you may find it in Great Tartary!" Other students of occult sciences have had more than the word of "certain spirits" to rely upon in this special case—they have seen the books, (II, 470.)

But there are numbers of these mystic brotherhoods which have naught to do with "civilized" countries; and it is in their unknown communities that are concealed the skeletons of the past. These "adepts" could, if they chose, lay claim to strange ancestry, and exhibit verifiable documents that would explain many a mysterious page in both sacred and profane history. Had the keys to the hieratic writings and the secret of Egyptian and Hindu symbolism been known to the Christian Fathers, they would not have allowed a single monument of old to stand unmutilated. And yet, if we are well informed—and we think we are—there was not one such in all Egypt, but the secret records of its hieroglyphics were carefully registered by the sacerdotal caste. These records still exist, though "not extant" for the general public, though perhaps the monuments may have passed away for ever out of human sight. (II, 403.)

In *The Secret Doctrine* we find the following:

If one turns to science for chronological information, one . . . will learn that, sc far, no trustworthy numerical estimate of the ages of the world and man could be made, and that both geology and anthropology are at sea. Yet when a student of esoteric philosophy presumes to bring forward the teachings of Occult Science, he is at once sat upon. . . . Therefore we are first told that the farthest date to which documentary record extends is now generally regarded by Anthropology as but "the earliest distinctly visible point of the pre-historic period" (*Encyclopædia Britannica*).

At the same time it is confessed that "beyond that period stretches back a vast indefinite series of pre-historic ages." (II, 66.)

It is with those specified "Ages" that we shall begin. They are

"prehistoric" to the naked eye of matter only. To the spiritual eagle eye of the seer and the prophet of every race, Ariadne's thread stretches beyond that "historic period" without break or flaw, surely and steadily into the very night of time; and the hand which holds it is too mighty to drop it, or even let it break. Records exist, although they may be rejected by the profane; though many of them are tacitly accepted by philosophers and men of great learning, and meet with an unvarying refusal only from the official and collective body of *orthodox* science. (II, 67.)

Eastern Initiates maintain that they have preserved records of the racial development and of events of universal import ever since the beginning of the Fourth Race—that which preceded being traditional. Moreover, those who believe in Seership and Occult powers will have no difficulty in crediting the general character, at least, of the information given, even if traditional, once the latter is checked and corrected by the corroboration of clairvoyance and esoteric knowledge. But in the present case no such metaphysical belief is claimed as our chief dependence, but a proof is given on what, to every Occultist, is quite a scientific evidence—the records preserved through the *Zodiac* for incalculable ages. (I, 646-47.)

However it may be, the records of the temples, Zodical and traditional as well as the ideographic records of the East, as read by the adepts of the Sacred Science and Vidya, are not a whit more doubtful than the so-called ancient history of the European nations, now edited, corrected and amplified by half a century of archaeological discoveries, and the very problematical readings of the Assyrian tiles, cuneiform fragments, and Egyptian hieroglyphics. So are our data based upon the same readings, in addition to an almost inexhaustible number of Secret works of which Europe knows nothing—*plus* the perfect knowledge by the Initiates of the symbolism of every word so recorded. Some of these records belong to an immense antiquity. Every archeologist and palaeontologist is acquainted with the ideographic productions of certain semi-savage tribes, who from time immemorial have aimed at rendering their thoughts symbolically. This is the earliest mode of recording events and ideas. And how old this knowledge is in the human race may be inferred from some signs, evidently ideographic, found on hatchets of the palaeolithic period. (II, 438-39.)

Of the language of such records it is said:

All the ancient records were written in a language which was universal and known to all nations alike in days of old, but which is now intelligible only to the few . . . all the words of that mystery language signified the same thing to each man of whatever nationality. (I, 310.)

The Secret Doctrine teaches us that the arts, sciences, theology, and especially the philosophy of every nation which preceded the last *universally known*, but not universal Deluge, had been recorded ideographically from the primitive oral records of the Fourth Race, and that these were the inheritance of the latter from the early Third Root-Race before the allegorical Fall. (II, 530.)

There is another sort of record:

Events which were never written outside the human memory, but which were religiously transmitted from one generation to another, and from race to race, may have been preserved by constant transmission "within the book volume of the brain," and through countless æons, with more truth and accuracy than inside any written document or record . . . and though "the book and volume" of the *physical* brain may forget events within the scope of one terrestrial life, the bulk of collective recollections can never desert the divine soul within us. Its whispers may be too soft, the sound of its words too far off the plane perceived by our physical senses; yet the shadow of events that *were*, just as much as the shadow of events *that are to come*, is within its perceptive powers, and is ever present before its mind's eye. (II, 424.)

One last important statement reads:

Occult teachings are pre-eminently panspermic, and the early history of humanity is hidden only "from ordinary mortals"; nor is the history of the primitive Races buried from the Initiates in the tomb of time, as it is for profane science. Therefore, supported on the one hand by that science which shows to us progressive development and an internal cause for every external modification, as a law in Nature; and, on the other hand, by an implicit faith in the wisdom—we may say pansophia even—of the universal traditions gathered and preserved by the Iniates, who have perfected them into an almost faultless system—thus supported, we venture to state the doctrine clearly. (II, 133.)

A long letter from one of the Theosophical Adepts, written in 1882, published by Mr. Sinnett in *Esoteric Buddhism*, speaks of records belonging to a lost antiquity:

We affirm that a series of civilizations existed before as well as after the glacial period, that they existed upon various points of the globe, reached the apex of glory, and died. Every trace and memory had been lost of the Assyrian and Phoenician civilizations, until discoveries began to be made a few years ago. And now they open a new though not by far one of the earliest pages in the history of mankind. And yet how far back do these

civilizations go in comparison with the oldest, and even them, history is slow to accept. Archaeology has sufficiently demonstrated that the memory of man runs back vastly further than history has been willing to accept, and the sacred records of once mighty nations preserved by their heirs are still more worthy of trust. We speak of civilizations of the ante-glacial period, and not only in the minds of the vulgar and the profane, but even in the opinions of the highly learned geologist the claim sounds preposterous.

(*To be continued*)

SPIRITUAL VISIONS

There are two kinds of seership—that of the soul and that of the spirit. The seership of the ancient Pythoness, or of the modern mesmerized subject, vary but in the artificial modes adopted to induce the state of clairvoyance. But, as the visions of both depend upon the greater or less acuteness of the senses of the astral body, they differ very widely from the perfect, omniscient spiritual state; for, at best, the subject can get but glimpses of truth, through the veil which physical nature interposes. The astral principle, or mind, called by the Hindu Yogin *fav-atma,* is the sentient soul, inseparable from our physical brain, which it holds in subjection, and is in its turn equally trammelled by it. This is the *ego,* the intellectual life-principle of man, his conscious entity. While it is yet *within* the material body, the clearness and correctness of its spiritual visions depend on its more or less intimate relation with its higher Principle. When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees; then only is it the pure, rational, *super*sentient soul. That state is known in India as the *Samadhi*; it is the highest condition of spirituality possible to man on earth.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

"THE SAME OLD THINGS"

PERIODS of mental and "spiritual" boredom are common with earnest students of Theosophy. That they are assimilative periods, or may be, is what we do not understand. While they are on us we believe that they are going to last forever. That is because we lay hold of them with such serious and terrible earnestness; we would not feel so, did we not pump them full of power by our thought. Consider the caterpillar: when it moves from one leaf to another—from a lower leaf, say, to a leaf that is higher up. Is there not for it a period of vain reachings? Coming to the edge of one leaf and desiring to reach up and over to the other, it does not writhe and stretch, and put forth and pull back, trying here and there and elsewhere, having a busy, but actually a static, season so far as progress is concerned? Then at last it reaches over, and draws *itself* over to the higher leaf. At times with us would-be disciples, things are very much like that.

To be "sick of things," in difficult, probationary days, sometimes indicates progress. Not that we need to be proud of the state or seek to induce it, or utilize the fact in our fits of mental laziness or "personality" as an excuse. Well we should know, "An excuse is worse than a lie; for it is a lie guarded." But we would not feel "sick" if we were satisfied with *ourselves,* that is certain. We think it is the environment which dissatisfies us, though when we look things over thoughtfully we find it is the same old environment that was observable when we were so well satisfied not long ago. We are the variants, not the environment; our attitude toward it has shifted, not the thing itself. Our "sick of things" feeling is the best evidence in the world that we have moved onward somewhat in our spiral path of evolution. We are in a *critical* state, using the term in a technical sense as a state between two states—neither the one nor the other, but between the two, and partaking something of the nature of both. After a time, like the caterpillar, we will reach over to the new and higher leaf, and draw ourselves up to it.

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Yet, it is a state which must be refused indulgence.

If we are unable to break it by taking an honest accounting of our mental and moral situation, unable to reason ourselves into a better frame of mind, unable to energize ourselves by flogging the Personal Idea into subjection and peace—for these are things that we must try—we can pursue another method.

The first and best thing to do is to recognize the condition. If with that recognition comes a chuckle—or at least a little smile—it is one more time a sense of humor has saved the day. The next best thing is to get out of that place metaphysical by moving to some task physical: go out and help somebody, with a smile on your face, convinced that it is the most important task that you can possibly do, and that you are the only one who can do it. For it *is* that to you, *if you think so*. Thus our important selves are set at their legitimate tasks, in accord with the demands of Great Nature, where before vain phantasies engaged us.

Plunge a sponge into a bowl of water and let it fill itself; lift it out, then try to get some more water into the sponge. No matter how many times you plunge it in the bowl, the sponge will carry no more water, for it is already full. The task is to get more water into the sponge. How? Why, just squeeze the sponge; it is as simple at that!

We are like the sponge; Theosophy, the water; our books, our meetings, our affairs of daily life—all constitute the bowl. If we have reached a point of saturation, as every student does sooner or later, we must *squeeze the sponge*: which means step out and perform some service—spill *ourselves,* by life, by service, by helping others, by consciously and confidently going out of our accustomed ways to initiate and carry through some unselfish action. What that action is does not matter so much, though common-sense ought to warn us and prevent the action from being "love's labor lost." It is the *doing for others* that counts for most, and that serves to "break" our state.

The foregoing method is *infallible*. Self-interest starts us, makes the action seem necessary; it soon is set aside as a motive and a purer one substituted—to help others. The specific application will become apparent when we have looked the field of possibilities over and selected that action and purpose we propose to perform and fulfil.

What a change comes in our metaphysical climate when service

has vitalized the old familiar things! The whole world and our relation to it seems once more to come into harmony and line. The caterpillar has drawn itself over to the leaf that is just above, there to rest and recuperate in the sunshine, there to feed and strengthen itself against its next upward climb on the spiral path of evolution towards the glorious creature it will become. Our books open up to us again, to reveal new and deeper meanings. The meetings are no longer gatherings where we hear "the same old things," but instead we marvel that we did not perceive what was in the well-worn phrases. "Why didn't he ever say *that* before," we exclaim to ourselves, and then remember it has been said and resaid; but we did not *get* it.

We begin to sense the truth of the saying of a true Teacher: "One can hardly exhaust the shades of meaning and applications that can be made in regard to these apparent commonplaces," now become commonplaces no longer for us. We find that these words are but a transmission, a restatement of what W.Q.J. had written before:

> I find that you state my view exactly. That view is that the A B C of Theosophy should be taught all the time, and this not only for the sake of outsiders, but also for the sake of the members who are, I very well know, not so far along as to need the elaborate work all the time. And it is just because the members are not well grounded that they are not able themselves to get in more inquirers. Just as you say, if the simple truths practically applied as found in Theosophy are presented, you will catch at last some of the best people, real workers and valuable members. And Theosophy can best be presented in a simple form by one who has mastered the elements as well as "the nature of the Absolute." It is just this floating in the clouds which sometimes prevents a Branch from getting on. And I fully agree, also, that if the policy I have referred to should result temporarily in throwing off some few persons it would be a benefit, for you would find others coming to take their places. And I can agree with you, furthermore, out of actual experience.

letters • questions • comment

In The Ocean of Theosophy *Mr. Judge says that the doctrine of cycles implies much more than recurrent periods of time; that, for instance, the force behind the solar system and our own globe, keeping it in existence and determining its great cycle, is "that of man himself considered as a spiritual being." Mankind as we know it hardly seems equal to such great responsibility. What may this statement imply about man's present capacities?*

Both man himself and to a large extent the world he inhabits are the product of human thought. "Man," as Mr. Judge has said, "is made of thought. His chains are through thought, his release due to nothing else." If we begin with the postulate that man is in essence an immortal being, the idea of reincarnation gives thought an immensely larger scope. It seems to follow naturally that he must, at some time, have created those conditions, even if their causes are too far in the past to be recognized now, and that he is by nature a creative being, continually initiating causes and experiencing their effects. Mr. Judge remarks earlier in the chapter on "Cycles" that the incompleteness and lack of accurate knowledge on the subject of cycles is due to "lack of belief in spiritual things and the desire to square everything with materialistic science." Man, then, is to be understood as not only his obvious capabilities and shortcomings, as evidenced in present actions, but also as a being of great potentiality and, if it were only realized, of great actual power for good. The theory of cycles applied to man as a psychic, mental and spiritual, as well as a physical being, implies that the thoughts generated by mankind have corresponding effects on all nature. The cyclic patterns we see around us are but the visible result of the thoughts from which they spring.

If the universe is an expression of all the intelligences concerned, the capacity to influence the course and destiny of life on this planet is shared by all, by each according to his capacity. The highest knowledge then becomes recognition of how to make the cycles generated by our thought yield experiences which increase awareness of the basic unity underlying all expressions of life.

Skill in action lies, not in greater power to manipulate the forces of nature, but in the application of this kingly knowledge to daily living. The largest astronomical cycles, as the smallest individual transactions, may in this way become expressions of deliberate evolutionary striving toward a more conscious life. The limits of these cycles are determined by the paths by which this impulse, reborn from previous cycles, roots itself in manifestation, grows, bears its fruit and is exhausted. The character of a cycle is determined partly by the will of the beings engaged in it and partly by what has been assimilated of the cycle which preceded it. In man, in whom this will is individualized, "the course of a man's life is the resultant of two forces, namely, his former Karma and his will power." (*Theosophist,* July, 1884.)

How, it might be asked, can man be responsible for the initiation and maintenance of great natural cycles, some of which he barely knows to exist, while others, being hidden, are experienced by him only in terms of their effects? The key to this mystery lies in Mr. Judge's qualification of "'man himself *considered as a spiritual being.*" We are not now as we once were, before becoming involved in physical existence. Moreover, man as a spiritual being means man conceived as a great hierarchy embodying self-consciousness and deliberate purpose. The highest members of the hierarchy, sometimes called the *Manasa-putras,* know the laws of nature and envision the tasks and responsibilities of a given cycle. They do what is necessary in behalf of the needs of the less progressed.

An analogy may be of use here. School children, for example, have their responsibility for many of the qualities of their experience in the classroom; as they mature, their responsibility increases, but not beyond the point of their awareness and potential capacity. The larger conditions of the school and of education in general are the responsibility of the older generation, of those who understand the needs of the children and the means best calculated to assist their development. So it is with all evolution. The law and order of this progress is given by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*:

> The next great Manvantara will witness the men of our own life-cycle becoming the instructors and guides of a mankind whose Monads may now yet be imprisoned—semi-conscious—in the most intellectual of the animal kingdom, while their lower principles will be animating, perhaps, the highest specimens of the Vegetable world. (I, 267.)

on the lookout

Ancient Craftsmen

The unparalleled excellence of ancient arts is a theme often developed in the writings of H.P.B. She gave particular attention to the lost beauties of past craftsmanship in *Isis Unveiled,* referring to fine linens woven by the Egyptians, the transparent and colored glass made by the ancient Chinese, and noting, also, the knowledge of metallurgy and chemistry of various peoples of antiquity. It is something of a pleasure to find that Lewis Mumford's diligent studies of the history of technology have led him to a similar conclusion. Writing in defense of ancient craftsmen, and speaking also of the humane conditions under which they worked, he says (in *The Pentagon of Power*):

> All these occupations required an assemblage of craft knowledge and skills; and the work, in the very process of growth and construction, changed from hour to hour and day to day. The process did not demand staying in the same position, performing a single uniform task, accepting monotony and uniformity, without at least the relief of a change of weather or seasons, or a change of pace. . . .
>
> In the workshop and the household there were plenty of tedious tasks, no doubt: but they were done in the company of one's fellows, at a pace that allowed for chatting and singing: there was none of the loneliness of the modern housewife presiding over a gang of machines, accompanied only by the insistent rumble and clatter and hum of her assistants. . . .
>
> Though hand labor brought many skills to the highest point of perfection—no machine can weave a cotton as fine as Dacca muslin with number 400 thread—an even more important characteristic was its wide diffusion, which is another way of referring to the tool-user's essential autonomy and self-reliance.

Imported Skills

H.P.B., as said, was a pioneer in this sort of recognition. Since admission of the knowledge and skills of the ancients depends largely on learning facts about the past, she often inserted in the *Theosophist* news notes drawing attention to them. In the April, 1884, number (V, 155), for example, we find the following:

> To those who boast too freely of our modern civilization, its arts, sciences, and complicated machinery, it may be somewhat humiliating to hear of the discovery by our modern Egyptologists and Assyriologists of textiles made thousands of years before our era,—whose "incomparable beauty leaves far behind it that of the most delicate textile so proudly displayed in our international exhibitions." Just now, one may see in Vienna the archaic fabrics worn by the ancient Greeks and Romans. They were found in Egypt by Mr. Groff. Herr Georg Ebers, the well-known Egyptologist . . . mentions beautiful linen cloth woven by a process hitherto claimed *as one of the latest* and the most perfect. The Roman dignitary of the fifth century, B.C., wore a tunic made out of such linen—moreover Groff discovered in the same lot, a real, so-called "Gobelin web." And this shows, as several papers now remark, that the well known "*tapisserie de haute lisse,*" as the Gobelin work is now called in France, the precious tapestry that decorated only the abodes of kings—is no invention of the French artists at all. It came to Europe, as nearly every other art did, from the East, imported probably by the Crusaders of the twelfth century.

Intellectual Prodigy

A young professor of philosophy at Princeton University, who, while in the fourth grade of elementary school, amazed his parents by re-inventing algebra, is now astonishing the professionals in his field by extending the boundaries of analytic philosophy and even challenging assumptions that have been at the foundation of modern thought for centuries. In the *New York Times Magazine* for Aug. 14, 1977, the intellectual exploits of this young man, Saul Kripke, are described by Taylor Branch:

> Kripke began teaching himself geometry and calculus in his last year of grammar school, and his teacher gave him some books on mathematical theory to occupy his time in the classroom. By the age of fifteen, Kripke became convinced that some of his ideas in mathematical logic had never appeared in the professional journals. It was more than a little awkward for Rabbi Kripke to induce a well-known mathematician, Haskell B. Curry, to look at his son's work, but soon the young high-school student from Omaha was on his way to present his ideas to a convention of mathematics professors at Rochester, N.Y.

Materialism in Philosophy

Today, standing at the apex of analytic philosophy, Kripke is said to be questioning some of its basic assumptions. He thinks,

Branch says, that the close partnership between mathematics and philosophy has been "overblown," and that the analytic philosophy, with its devotion to linguistic studies and logic, does not enjoy "thorough scientific objectivity." Mr. Branch quotes from Kripke:

> "Take Quine [W. V. O. Quine of Harvard, the senior eminence of American logic]. I think parts of his views are a kind of materialism or physicalism in which everything is physical and behavioristic—there are only physical causes of behavior. And with that view comes the view that philosophy should be a scientific enterprise, continuous with science. And that's a view in his work that's almost not even argued for, but assumed at the beginning. And I should think that that's highly personal, in a way. The notion that philosophy should be continuous with science can itself be sort of a religion.

Materialism Not Proved

The explanation of why Kripke has never achieved a Ph.D. degree is of special interest. While he attended Harvard, Oxford, Princeton, and Rockefeller University—working on his own, with occasional contact with such surroundings—he gained a full professorship without earning a doctorate—because, says Mr. Branch, "no one could ever quite decide who would presume to teach him, or in what field." Only recently has he permitted his papers on philosophical topics to be published. In one of these, titled "Naming and Necessity," he questioned a key assumption of the analytic philosophy—"that anything we cannot see or sense simply does not exist." Commenting, he said:

> Materialism, I think, must hold that a physical description of the world is a *complete* description of it, that any mental facts are "ontologically dependent" on physical facts in the straightforward sense of following from them by necessity. No identity theorist [materialist] seems to me to have made a convincing argument against the intuitive view that this is not the case.

With minds like Saul Kripke's loose in the academic world, it may not be long before something like a genuine renaissance begins in philosophical studies.

"Religious" or Human Rights?

The changing attitudes of the American people toward religion, especially in relation to what religion includes and what qualifies as "religious," are having far-reaching consequences which affect every aspect of human lives. Both the procedures and the decisions

of the courts reflect this change. In 1961, for example, the United States Supreme Court held it unconstitutional to require public officials to take an oath declaring belief in the existence of God. One reason given by the Court for this decision was that: "Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in God are Buddhism, Taoism, ethical culture, secular humanism, and others." Meanwhile, step by step, various rights or freedoms once regarded as distinctively "religious" are being recognized to be simply human rights, under the law. A number of these rights are now seen to have constitutional protection, and as a result the whole question of public education, as financed and controlled or regulated by a state or political authority, has been raised with increasing urgency.

Parents Have Authority

This question is the subject of an article by Stephen Arons, a Massachusetts attorney, "The Separation of School and State: *Pierce* Reconsidered," which appeared in the *Harvard Educational Review* for February, 1976, and is now available in pamphlet form from the Center for Independent Education, P.O. Box 2256, Wichita, Kansas 67201. The case referred to in the title—*Pierce v. Society of Sisters,* 1925—resulted in a decision by the Supreme Court that parents, not the state, have the right to select the school to which their children go, under compulsory education. While the decision made no reference to the First Amendment, it has been regarded as essentially affording constitutional protection to the religious rights of parents, which the state may not abridge or take away. Having pointed this out, Mr. Arons turns to the Yoder decision of the Court (*Wisconsin v. Yoder,* 1972) which upheld the claim of members of an Amish community in Wisconsin that their religious freedom was violated by a state law requiring them to send their fourteen- or fifteen-year-old children to either a public or a private high school (after the eighth grade). Such a law, the Court held, would destroy the value system underlying their community. As Mr. Arons points out, in giving the decision of the Court Chief Justice Burger "recognized a sophisticated and modern view of the nature and effect of schooling."

Conflict of Values

The reasoning of the Amish was accepted by the Court. Chief

Justice Burger said:

> They object to the high school and higher education generally because the values it teaches are in marked variance with Amish values and the Amish way of life; they view secondary school education as an impermissible exposure of their children to a "worldly" influence in conflict with their beliefs. The high school tends to emphasize intellectual and scientific accomplishments, self-distinction, competitiveness, worldly success, and social life with other students. Amish society emphasizes informal learning-through-doing, a life of "goodness" rather than a life of intellect, wisdom rather than technical knowledge, community welfare rather than competition, and separation rather than integration with contemporary worldly society.

On the surface, the meaning of this decision seems straightforward enough. State-imposed socialization through schooling was held unconstitutional because it directly conflicted with Amish religious tenets and beliefs.

A Fading Distinction

Mr. Arons' comment, however, discloses a larger significance. He says:

> But none of the value conflicts the Court cited—competitiveness versus cooperation, intellect versus wisdom, or disagreement over the status of manual work, for example—is necessarily religious. Any non-Amish family might be equally committed to such values and see them as threatened by state-sponsored socialization in schools. Religion provided the constitutional nexus between the plaintiff's injury and the state's policy, but the evidence the Court found compelling also supports a broader doctrine: Any conflict between public schooling and a family's basic and sincerely held values interferes with the family's First Amendment rights. Thus, even though the opinion was couched in terms of religious beliefs and practices, the Chief Justice's recognition of the various elements of value inculcation, none of which is itself of religious character, has the effect of eroding the meaningfulness of the distinction between secular and religious values upon which the Court has relied so heavily.

Separate School and State?

The implications are clear. Any parents having serious objection to the assumptions and practices of state-financed and state-controlled public school education have a right to object and to seek an alternative of their choice. And Mr. Arons points out the

reasonableness of considering that the state, through compulsory education laws, becomes responsible for an added economic burden on parents, who may have to pay highly in order to exercise their right to educate their children privately according to their personal convictions. A serious issue results: Whether state-supported education can any longer be regarded as culturally or legally acceptable in the United States. His concluding paragraphs spell out the problem:

> In its fifty-year life, *Pierce* has threaded its way through numerous cases involving the regulation of schooling, the compulsion of beliefs, challenges to compulsory schooling, religious liberties, and the establishment of the right to privacy. This history and some recent thinking about the First Amendment suggest that present state schemes for financing public education and regulating private education may be invalid. Because it protects against involuntary government intrusions upon individual consciousness, the First Amendment may require changing the economic and political structure of compulsory schooling to separate school and state, just as the First Amendment requires separation of church and state. If this view is correct, compulsory education may have to be revised to eliminate its economically discriminatory nature and to preserve freedom of belief for families in search of adequate education.

The Power To Mould

Conceivably, the numerous experimental schools which now dot the country, maintained at the cost of considerable sacrifice and expense by both parents and teachers, are a practical expression of the feelings of people who, while not denominationally classified as "religious," may share with the Amish at least some of their objections to the quality and influence of public school education. For evidence of these feelings, one has only to read such books as John Holt's *Why Children Fail,* and studies of the public school system such as Jonathan Kozol's *Death at an Early Age*. That the ideas there expressed, which are by no means new, are very much in the mind of Mr. Arons, is made plain by his final observations:

> Over a century ago, John Stuart Mill observed that state-sponsored education "is a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another: and as the mould in which it casts them is that which pleases the predominant power in the government, whether this be a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or the majority of the existing generation, in proportion as it is efficient and successful, it establishes a des-

potism over the mind."

> All that needs to be added to raise the power of this prediction to a twentieth-century observation are the words of Ivan Illich: "The school has become the established church of secular times."

Embarrassments of Orthodoxy

The disunities and divisions which come with cultural decline are evident in the unsettling response to a current book on Christian belief, *The Myth of God Incarnate,* recently published in Britain. For generations educated clerics have been unable to accept the claim of bodily or physical resurrection, preferring to regard this and other teachings as allegories having only a mythic significance, but such sophisticated interpretations are seldom offered to the rank and file of believers. The appearance of this book has pushed the challenge to literal belief out into the open, exciting much comment. In the *Los Angeles Times* for Sept. 5, 1977, John Dart, religious editor, collects interviews with a number of theologians on the question, reporting "an enormous gap between contemporary New Testament studies and the assumptions of the general public, even most churchgoers." This view is confirmed by one of the editors of the new book (the work of seven British theologians), John Hick, who said that virtually "all scholars" agree that Jesus did not present himself as "divine," although "many church members are not aware of this."

"Huge Credibility Gap"

In an afterword to a similar book published in Germany (*Jesus, Son of Man,* by Rudolf Augstein, editor of *Der Spiegel*), the president of the Society for Biblical Literature, David Noel Freedman of the University of Michigan, said that the author "is determined to expose the hypocrisy of the church; that is, the huge credibility gap between what its best minds have known for decades and what it nevertheless continues to teach and preach to the masses." The chief bone of contention in such books is the unique divinity of Christ and a literal interpretation of the resurrection. Several theologians are quoted by John Dart as saying that while these teachings have long been abandoned by the majority of the clergy, only a portion of church congregations is ready to accept the uncertainties of this liberal view. Mr. Dart summarizes:

> Some segments of Protestantism and Catholicism are comfortable with a nonliteral reading of the Bible. Myths, they say,

may be nonhistorical but may still convey a deep truth.

But how to convey that understanding, held widely at the university and seminary level, to the pews and to nonbelievers who have rejected fundamentalism?

No Tools for Growth

The problem, quite evidently, is the lack of philosophy in Christian teaching to enable its followers to grow intellectually into maturer forms of faith. Those whose reasoning faculties remain undeveloped find themselves shocked by the views of persons who have made a careful study of religious ideas. A Texas dean of religious studies told the *Times* writer that he questioned whether "Christianity can remain a viable option for those who have not been taught to be reflective about the meaning of their religious symbols." Another theologian, however, Robert McAfee Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, skirted the issue as unimportant, suggesting that the churches should not concern themselves with the intellectual problems of unbelievers, but meet the needs of the poor and downtrodden. He said:

> For them the problem is not so much "How can I believe in God in the world of modern science?" but "How can I believe in God when my children are starving or my family is being tortured or the system under which I live doesn't care whether I live or die?"

There is, it seems clear, little common ground among the instructors of modern Christianity on what to do about such questions. Philosophizing and refining Christian allegory simply does not work for a population unprovided with tools for broadening their intellectual understanding, and which has been encouraged to rely on the hearsay of literal belief for many centuries.

The Logical Solution

It should be noted that virtually all these problems confronting serious Christians have long ago been explored by inquiring minds. The question of whether Jesus was Man or God was subjected to exhaustive analysis by John Campbell Graham many years ago ("Fast and Loose in Theology," *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1938), and the various meanings of "Resurrection," as found in the Christian scriptures, are discussed at length by Frederick Spencer, again in the *Hibbert Journal* (April, 1937), a religious magazine of open-minded content. After a careful review of the sources of the resurrection idea in the Bible, Dr. Spencer wrote:

> If in the Resurrection the incarnate and the discarnate modes of living are combined, one would think that the previous incarnate experience would not be so negligible in proportion to the discarnate. How could an infant dying after birth, a cave-dweller before the dawn of civilization, or even one who had enjoyed a career of many-sided usefulness and culture in the heyday of his nation's prosperity, have had all the participation in mortal humanity requisite for his incorporation into immortal humanity?

Requirements of Learning

> As we ponder this problem we are compelled more and more by the irresistible force of logic to suppose that the individuals that will share in the Resurrection will have had more than one, yea numerous, bodily experiences from birth to death, entering on them with the temporary oblivion of the past necessary for undistracted concentration on the present. Especially for the application of Christian principles for the working-out of salvation, not only in fear and trembling, but in faith and love, for the living-out of Christ in man under the conditions of mortality, each must come again and yet again with the freshness of childhood and the eagerness of youth, in order to attain the full spiritual maturity of the Resurrection.
>
> . . . belief in reincarnation as leading up to the Resurrection rather supplements and fills out the hopefulness of the Resurrection doctrine; for it suggests, not only that the ultimate destiny of the race is supremely good, but that the way to it is by progressive increase and approximation, of both race and individuals *pari passu*.

This seems an excellent example of what may result when the force of logic is permitted to illuminate the doctrinal ambiguities of Christian teaching.

Believe—or Else . . .

Logic, however, has been carefully avoided as a tool of instruction of the Christian masses, and the broad moral and social consequences of this policy in religious education may be seen in a *Saturday Review* (Sept. 17, 1977) article by Dwayne Walls, "The Jesus Mania: Bigotry in the Name of the Lord." Here, indeed, is evidence of "the deliberate surrender of intellect and its imprisonment in the narrow grooves of bigotry and superstition." The aggressive conversion techniques of the lay as well as the clerical advocates of this rapidly spreading form of Pentecostal Christianity put to shame the modest efforts of the Jehovah's Witnesses to secure adherents. Mr. Wells reports:

In the Boston area last fall, the president of a small electronics manufacturing firm dissolved his entire distribution network of 14 dealers and distributors because he felt compelled by God to make the company all-Christian. The firm now contracts with and hires only people who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

In Baltimore, the Born Again Realty company, an affiliate of the National Network of Christian Realtors, used to advertise "Christians preferred." Under criticism, the company deleted the reference.

In Okaloosa County, Florida, the public school board tried to fire a young teacher who objected to the board's policy of opening every school day with a required classroom prayer and Bible reading.

T-Shirt Credo

Generalizing, this writer says:

Tens of millions of Americans are parading their version of the Word on the sidewalks and in thousands of denominations, one-congregation churches and quasi-churches, radio and television ministries, cults, sects, fellowships, house-to-house visits, and religion-oriented business ventures. What few people know is the extent of the pressure, harassment, and intimidation involved in some of these "spiritual" activities. The country seems to be increasingly well supplied with zealots who take the conversion of their fellow men as the supreme act of faith. They are splitting established churches, severely testing the concept of religious freedom, and embarrassing believers whose theology cannot be summed up on a bumper sticker or a T-shirt.

No denomination, apparently, is immune:

. . . among the nation's 49 million Catholics, only one-fourth of whom are considered active churchgoers, an estimated 2.5 million now speak in tongues and consider themselves not merely Catholics but "charismatic" Catholics. They are members of a movement called Charismatic Renewal, which is nothing more than Pentecostalism, or the Holiness faith, with a new name. . . . Another 2.5 million charismatics are scattered widely throughout the nation's Protestant churches, some welcomed in their denominations, some barely tolerated, and a few denied fellowship.

Bottom-Line Religion

The "Jesus" movement has a strong commercial coloring:

It not only has captured entertainers, such as Anita Bryant and Tony Orlando, but it is also becoming highly marketable

> itself. Religious book publishing is booming. A whole new industry is flourishing in the manufacture and distribution of religion-oriented records, tape cassettes, audio-visual systems, periodicals, lapel buttons, jewelry, and bumper stickers.

Radio and television are media increasingly used, despite the high cost of time, and one religious broadcaster has reported income from contributions of $1.5 million per month. Seeming to anticipate a breakdown of all forms of Christian orthodoxy, the writer says that "church religion" might eventually be replaced by "disembodied voices and faces on radio and TV sets." He adds: "The Jesus movement, with its demonstrated affinity for pop culture, would be right at home in such a setting."

Excesses and Weakness

There is this concluding comment:

> The entire movement, it seems, has one common denominator: an unyielding determination to exalt Jesus Christ and make every living soul his follower. Excesses inevitably accompany the journey toward any such goal. So do internal divisions, and therein lies an inherent weakness in the movement. Christians do not agree among themselves on a definition of Christianity or on what it means to follow the teachings of Christ.

One sees here, on a mass scale, the karmic progeny of habitual deformation of the intellectual principle, and also the linkage of its multiple effects with the spreading psychism of times. Further breakups into more and smaller groups as a result of the divisive tendencies noted by the *Saturday Review* writer may prove the only practical remedy, until some sort of emotional exhaustion ensues.

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